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Liebknecht is as much a traitor as is any Junker in the land. What havoc the veteran Hyndman makes with his comrades who think the war is explained by "capitalism." So ex-congressman Berger talks of socialist "nonsense" written about the war, as by those who "make their task easy" by simply blaming capitalism—which is "only one cause and a minor one at that." This is very different from Debs, who has it: "The profit system is responsible for it all."

Almost more important is Victor Adler's contention that labor's international interests are not common and united against those of capital.

As with many another too easy philosophy, this world war will compel a revaluation and a restatement of almost every "fundamental" in the socialist ritual. It will force much sharper distinctions and more rigorous tests in the most familiar and accepted terminology. Collectivism, socialism, syndicalism, are words that must give a more satisfactory account of themselves. As this is written, an article reaches me in an English socialist journal on "The New Syndicalism." So soon does this most recent variation require an altered emphasis!

As with secret diplomacies and their favorite formulas; as with theories of nationality, state, and sovereignty; as with the whole batch of liberal and optimistic politics, not one of the revolutionary *isms* will escape the severities of a discipline so searching that the socialist ideals, as a whole, will doubtless emerge a much more intelligible and formidable factor in social reconstruction.

JOHN GRAHAM BROOKS.

Cambridge, Mass.

*Reflections on Violence.* By GEORGES SOREL. Authorized translation by T. E. HULME. (New York: B. F. Huebsch. 1912. Pp. x, 299. \$2.25.)

It is doubtful if any book can be named that is better calculated to state the spirit and method of revolution than this special volume by Georges Sorel. The introduction alone will convince any reader that this study is not to be skipped by one who would know the most penetrating observations upon the various anarchisms of the hour.

It is frequently repeated, "Sorel has dropped his syndicalism and become a tory." In the brief note prefixed to this volume, he warns us that so far as concerns his philosophy of violence he is "more than ever convinced of its value." In the appendix he adds:

When, in 1905, I ventured to write in some detail on proletarian violence I understood perfectly the grave responsibility I assumed in trying to show the historic bearings of actions which our Parliamentary Socialists try to dissimulate with so much skill. Today I do not hesitate to assert that Socialism could not continue to exist without an apology for violence.

In seven chapters, he treats of violence in its relations to the class war; the decadence of the middle classes; our prevailing prejudices; the proletarian strike; the general (political) strike; the ethics of violence; and the ethics of the producers. It is here one sees at its best his more distinctive contribution: his contempt of the middle class and of all those who would conciliate it—Sidney Webb, Bernstein, Bellamy, Vandervelde and Jaurès. “All that can be put to his (Webb’s) credit is that he has waded through uninteresting bluebooks and has had the patience to compose an extremely indigestible compilation on the history of trade unionism; he has a mind of the narrowest description,” etc. To a man as acute as Tarde, Sorel tells us Webb seemed a “worthless scribbler.”

In chapter 4 is his clearest exposition of the “myth” and its educational power over the masses as yet unspoiled by pedants and politicians. It is not of the least importance that myths are merely of the imagination. They move men to action. What is vital is that in every great social movement men should see the triumph of their cause pictorially. Mere evolutionary growth has no such heroic appeal. Marx’s theory of surplus value is of the slightest consequence compared to the Marx myth—the catastrophic revolution. Sorel flinches from no test as he unfolds his philosophy of the myth in relation to the general strike and the class war. It was far better for Christians and for the world that they believed in the impossible. “The future lies in the hands of those who are not disillusioned. Wise men thought Mazzini a ‘dupe’; but it can no longer be denied that without Mazzini Italy would never have become a great power and that he did more for Italian unity than Cavour and all the politicians of his school.”

It is this rather haughty partizanship expressing itself in sharp historic judgments of this character which best enables us to measure the sobriety of this brilliant casuist. Things unknown and indefinite, the mere “torment of the infinite,” have for him the highest practical value and sanction. He even dedicates his volume “*A la mémoire de la campagne de ma jeunesse.*” On the

other hand, he has a passion for the definite, as in his entire conception and presentation of the proletariat as a class with "global" interests over against the capitalist class. It is the main function of violence to keep alive the sense of antagonism between these. He is adroit in diverting attention from the crude and immediate results of violence, trying rather to keep the imagination fixed on distant and idealized consequences which he construes in terms of social reconstruction. The derision with which he treats professors, progressives, reformers and sociologists is only a part of his profound distrust in the essential timidities of all compromise. Even the great whom he honored came to grief. "Taine failed in his enterprise as Le Play and Renan failed, as all those will fail who try to found an intellectual and moral reform on investigations, on scientific syntheses, and on demonstrations." And so "violence enlightened by the idea of the general strike" gets enthroned in this philosophy.

It has to be said that no extravagance deprives us of respect for this vigorous writer. Over against his severities toward social peace and peacemakers, he never flatters the proletariat, in whom he sees such saving gifts. These masses are the reservoir of primitive and enduring virtues. He quotes admiringly all evidence of our western vigilance committees and even that in New Orleans (1890) which made short work of the Italian *maffiosi* in spite of the fact that legal agencies were generations old in that community. One wonders what he would say of negro lynchings and Atlanta riots. Yet it is unfair to judge him finally by his concrete examples and analogies. He is in perfect agreement with Kautsky that the "*idea* of revolution" should be kept burning in the minds of the proletariat. That seems to him impossible without attendant violence, precisely as violence—or at least the idea and the threat of it—is known by labor leaders to have its place in modern strikes. We do not like to admit this, and labor leaders themselves publicly and piously disown violence. Sorel tries to compel us to face the fact without being ashamed of it.

Apart from what is known of his technical training, one has but to note in the present volume his skilled use of varied writers of first rank (Sir Henry Maine and Cardinal Newman are examples in England) to realize something of Sorel's intellectual equipment. His use of irony is too frequent but very telling, as in his innumerable thrusts at Jaurès, describing the "peasant duplicity which would have made him a prince of cattle dealers"; or "Jaurès

no doubt believes he is acting for the greatest good of socialism just as the more easy type of casuists believed themselves the best and most useful defenders of the Church. They did even prevent weak Christians from irreligion as Jaurès saves rich intellectuals and induces them to *take up shares in the party journals*."

In no two or three-page notice is it possible to criticise or even properly to "expose" this vigorous and fearless study. It is full of temperamental eccentricities which we have to tolerate if we would learn from it what it has to teach us. It is well translated.

JOHN GRAHAM BROOKS.

#### NEW BOOKS

LA CHESNAIS, P. G. *Le groupe socialiste du Reichstag et la déclaration de guerre*. (London: Colin. 1915. Pp. 101. 1s. 6d.)

KLEIN, H. H. *Bankrupting a great city (the story of New York)*. (New York: H. H. Klein, 154 Nassau St. 1915. Pp. 188. 75c.)

O'BRIEN, C. *Coöperative mills and bakeries*. (Dublin: The Plunkett House. 1915. Pp. 50. 6d.)

RADOLF, L. *Vaterland und Sozialdemokratie*. (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot. 1915. 1.50 M.)

RUCZKA, G. *Die russischen Sozialisten und der gegenwärtige Krieg*. (Vienna: J. Feith. 1915. Pp. iv, 79. 1 M.)

SAVOY, I. and TECK, M. O. *The A B C of socialism (including the A B C of economics)*. (Boston: Badger. 1915. Pp. 140. 50c.)

WHITE, B. *Letters from prison. Socialism a spiritual sunrise*. (Boston: Badger. 1915. Pp. 163. 25c.)

*Facts for socialists*. Twelfth edition, enlarged. (London: Fabian Society. 1915. 2d.)

*Municipally owned utility plants in the state of Ohio*. (Chicago: Public Service Pub. Co. 1915. Pp. 305-331.)

### Statistics and Its Methods

#### NEW BOOKS

BLEICHER, H. *Statistik. I. Allgemeines, Physikalische und Bevölkerungsstatistik*. (Leipzig: Göschel. 1915. Pp. 148. 0.90 M.)

BOWLEY, A. L. *The nature and purpose of the measurement of social phenomena*. (London: King. 1915. Pp. viii, 241. 3s. 6d.)

The title of this book suggests a scope very much more inclusive than is revealed by a perusal of the contents. The author recognizes this fact but states that the work is essentially a reproduction of five public lectures on this general subject and that the matter presented is intended to be suggestive rather than exhaustive. The book actually deals with the measurement of those phenomena relating to the